

transmitting said packet through a pager network to all of said appliances;
passively receiving said packet at all of said appliances without any interaction by users
of said printer appliances; and

7.8. automatically accepting and selectively processing and passively printing only those
packets whose identification numbers match the appliance identification number from all those
packets received without any further action by a user of said appliance.

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed December 23, 2003 and the references cited therein have been carefully considered. Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 11, 17 and 20, and the application still contains claims 1-22. Inasmuch as no new claims were added, no new fee is required for additional claims. However, since this response is being filed with a request for a two month extension, the fee for such extension is enclosed.

In the aforesaid Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-16 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over West et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,845,259) in view of Bullock et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,070,404) and Hortensius et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,917,629). Claims 17-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Hortensius and Bullock.

Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define the patentable features of the present invention and now recites:

1. A system for passively delivering selected printed packets of information or messages to intended recipients of said packets on a network of printer appliances without the need for any interaction by a user of said printer appliances, said system including:

means for compiling and storing the packets to be delivered;

wireless transmission means for transmitting all of said packets to the entire network without any interaction by users of said printer appliances, said wireless transmission means comprising a pager system; and

at least one printer appliance on said network of printer appliances, said at least one appliance including:

means for identifying individual printer appliances;

receiving means for receiving all of said packets without any interaction by users of said printer appliances;

processing means for automatically accepting and selectively processing only those packets intended for said individual printer appliance from all those packets received without any interaction by users of said printer appliances; and

printing means for passively printing the intended packet without any further action by a user of said appliance.

It will be appreciated that the system of claim 1, amended, offers numerous advantages over the prior art in that it provides a wireless system for the mass distribution of packets of information (such as coupons), which packets of information are delivered in print form, to selected printer appliances at any location (home, work, in an automobile or any freestanding location anywhere) for eventual redemption at a store. The prior art relied upon by the Examiner neither teaches or suggests such a unique combination.

The patent to West et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,845,259) was cited by the Examiner to show a system for passively delivering printed packets of information or messages to intended recipients of the packets on a network of printer appliances without the need for interaction by a user of the printer appliances. However, applicant's reliance on West is somewhat misguided as West does not teach the automatic distribution and processing of the packets of information as required by the claims of the current application, as amended. Rather, interaction is required on the part of the user or the operator of the system.

The Examiner argues that West provided processing means (36 in Fig. 2) for selectively processing only those packets intended for the appliance without any interaction by users of the printer appliances (col. 3, lines 45-46). However, there is no such teaching or suggestion in

West. The language cited by the Examiner discusses the uses of a “memory for electronically storing a plurality of coupons...” and “one or more user interfaces for permitting selection of any of the plurality of coupons from a coupon menu....” It is therefore clear from the language of West that the system requires user interaction, and does not provide a means for “automatically accepting and selectively processing only those packets intended for said individual printer appliance from all those packets received without any interaction by users of said printer appliances” as is required by the claims of the present application, as amended.

West details a system where all of the hardware is configured as a fixed installation within a particular store, and a customer on entering the store selects a coupon from a terminal hooked directly to the point-of-sale store system. Presumably having selected the coupon the consumer is motivated to purchase the coupon during the store visit. Such aspect of the system of West is detailed in the language of claim 1 of West, which requires “a point of sale system including a terminal having a data reader for reading coupon redemption data ... and system memory for storing redemption data....” The system of the present invention is concerned only with the mass distribution of coupons, does not include any redemption elements, and has no involvement with any POS terminal. Furthermore, claim 1 of West requires “an electronic coupon dispenser ... a user interface for permitting selection from a coupon menu ... a printer for printing coupons selected at said user interface....” The only common element in the system of the present invention is the use of a generic printer. There is no coupon dispenser *per se*, no user interface, no facility for making any type of selection by the user and the printer has no capability to print coupons dependent upon selection criteria.

In fact, the system of West and the system of the present invention serve vastly different purposes. West provides for an in-store terminal where a shopper can view offers available at the

store from a menu directly linked to the point of sale terminal, make a coupon choice, and on purchase of the product, the applicable redemption data can be captured and stored. Relatively few coupons will be issued but as he observes the redemption rate will be much improved. Conversely, the claims of the present invention, as amended, provide a system for the mass distribution of coupons, that are delivered in print form, at any location (home, work, in an automobile or any freestanding location anywhere) that can be redeemed at any store. There is no in-store terminal, no user interface, no pre-print selection, no connection to a point-of-sale system and no provision for capturing redemption data. Very high volumes of coupons can be delivered with our system similar to the promotions run in the form of preprinted free-standing inserts distributed in news papers. Typically hundreds of millions of coupons can be distributed in a single promotion. Obviously this is vastly different from the West process where consumers use terminals on an individual basis. In terms of simple practicality distribution volumes are much less.

The Examiner cites Bullock to show the transmission of packets of information by a wireless transmission means and receiving means from printer appliance, and Hortensius as teaching means for compiling the packets to be delivered.

While it may be true that Bullock could add wireless distribution capability to the West invention, this addition would merely permit the system of West to remotely load information to the point-of-sale system in terms of up-dated coupon menus, and would not change any basic function of the West system or change any features that remain distinctly different from our invention. Regarding Hortensius, while the patent does describe a method of compiling information packets, it is very different from the method deployed in the system of the present invention which imparts distribution selectivity.

Regarding method claims 17-22, the Examiner argues that Bullock teaches receiving all of the packets at each of the appliances, the appliance being adapted to decode a destination identifier and selectively process and print only those packets intended to be processed and printed by the appliance, wherein the intended packet is passively printed without any action by a user. Here too, applicants believe that the Examiner is misinterpreting the language of the specification in Bullock. The passage cited by the Examiner (col. 2, lines 49-50) clearly states that the "data may be selectively printed by a user." There is no teaching nor suggestion that the printer appliance includes means for "automatically accepting and selectively processing only those packets intended for said individual printer appliance from all those packets received without any interaction by users of said printer appliances" as is required by the claims of the present application, as amended.

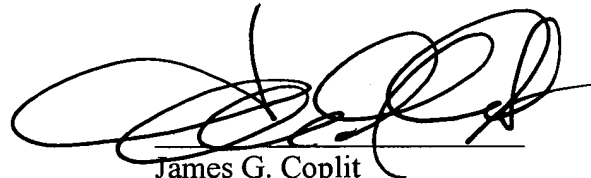
The system of Hortensius is primarily concerned with the interface between a wired and wireless, communication systems which does not appear to have any relevance to the invention of the present application. Bullock describes a method of packaging and delivering information via broadcast technologies but it is completely different from that used in present system. Bullock is a two-step process involving a first standard broadcast signal followed by a subsequent and secondary cue signal that initiates demodulation at the user location. It does not contain any component that decides on eligibility to print or initiator to print if eligible. The present system uses a single consolidated signal that immediately initiates demodulation and makes a decision on whether the user location is eligible to print the message (coupon).

In light of these amendments and remarks, applicants submit that claim 1, amended, now patentably distinguishes over all of the references cited by the Examiner, taken alone or in combination, and is condition for immediate allowance.

Claims 2-10 depend from and further restrict claim 1, amended, and applicants submit that these claims likewise distinguish over these references for the same reason as claim 1, amended. Independent claims 11, 17 and 20 have been amended in the same manner as claim 1, amended, to more clearly identify the patentable features of the invention. Applicants submit that in view of these amendments, these claims and all claims that depend from and further restrict them, patentably distinguish over the references of records, whether taken alone or in combination, and are also in condition for immediate allowance.

In view of the foregoing, applicants submit that all claims are in condition for immediate allowance. Reconsideration and an early Notice of Allowance are therefore requested. In the event that the Examiner should determine that the aforesaid Amendment does not place the case in condition for immediate allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney by telephone to discuss what additional steps would be necessary to immediately place the case in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James G. Coplit', is written over a horizontal line.

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COMPLETE LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (AMENDED) A system for passively delivering selected printed packets of information or messages to intended recipients of said packets on a network of printer appliances without the need for any interaction by a user of said printer appliances, said system including:

means for compiling and storing the packets to be delivered;

wireless transmission means for transmitting all of said packets to the entire network without any interaction by users of said printer appliances, said wireless transmission means comprising a pager system; and

at least one printer appliance on said network of printer appliances, said at least one appliance including:

means for identifying individual printer appliances;

receiving means for receiving all of said packets without any interaction by users of said printer appliances;

processing means for automatically accepting and selectively processing only those packets intended for said individual printer appliance from all those packets received without any interaction by users of said printer appliances; and

printing means for passively printing the intended packet without any further action by a user of said appliance.

2. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 1, wherein said system further includes a subscriber directory for storing subscriber information concerning the intended recipients of said packets.

3. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 2, wherein said system further includes a database manager for processing said packets from said means for compiling and storing said packets and the subscriber information from said subscriber directory.

4. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 3, wherein said system further includes a transmission sequence compiler for placing the packets to be delivered into a predetermined order of transmission to the printer appliances.

5. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 4, wherein said system further includes at least one modem for conveying said packets from said transmission sequence compiler to said wireless network.

6. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 1, wherein each of said printer appliances is adapted to receive all of said packets and process only those packets intended to be processed by said appliance.

7. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 1, wherein each of said printer appliances is adapted to provide printed copies of said packets using a thermal printer.

8. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 1, wherein each of said printer appliances is adapted

to transfer said packets to an electronic smart card for subsequent use by the recipient.

9. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 1, wherein said packets are redeemable coupons.

10. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 1, wherein said packets are selected from the group consisting of redeemable coupons, messages, appointment reminders, event tickets, warnings, alerts, and advertisements.

11. (AMENDED) A system for passively delivering printed packets of information to intended recipients of said packets on a network of printer appliances without the need for any interaction by a user of said printer appliances, said system including:

a bank for receiving and storing the packets to be delivered;

a subscriber directory for storing the names and information of intended recipients of said packets;

a database manager for processing the packets from the bank and subscriber information from said subscriber directory and identifying those recipients eligible for receiving said packets;

a pager network for transmitting said packets to said recipients without any interaction by users of said printer appliances;

a transmission sequencer for placing the packets to be delivered into a predetermined order of transmission to the printer appliances; and

at least one printer appliance on said network of printer appliances, said at least one printer appliance including:

means for identifying individual printer appliances;

receiving means for receiving all of said packets without any interaction by users of said printer appliances;

processing means for automatically accepting and selectively processing only those packets intended for said individual printer appliance from all those packets received without any interaction by users of said printer appliances; and

printing means for passively printing the intended packet without any further action by a user of said appliance.

12. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 11, wherein said system further includes a transmission sequence compiler for placing the packets to be delivered into a predetermined order of transmission to the printer appliances.

13. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 11, wherein said system further includes a modem bank including at least one modem for conveying said packets from said transmission sequence compiler to said pager network.

14. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 11, wherein said packets are selected from the group consisting of redeemable coupons, messages, appointment reminders, event tickets,

warnings, alerts, and advertisements.

15. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 11, wherein each of said printer appliances has a unique appliance code number.

16. (ORIGINAL) The system of claim 15, wherein said database manager is adapted to identify the intended recipients of said packets prior to transmission by identifying the appliance code number of the characteristics of its owner.

17. (AMENDED) A method for transmitting packets of information over a pager network to a network of remote printer appliances, each of said appliances including means to receive and selectively print predetermined packets, said method comprising the steps of:

transmitting one or more of said packets over said pager network to all of the appliances on the network, each of said packets including a destination identifier to identify only those printer appliances intended to process and print a particular packet; [and]

passively receiving said packets at each of said appliances without any interaction by users of said printer appliances; ~~each of said appliances being adapted to decode said destination identifier and selectively process and passively print only those packets intended for said appliance without any further action by a user of said appliance~~

decoding said destination identifier to identify those individual printer appliances for which each of said packets is intended;

automatically accepting and selectively processing only those packets intended for said printer appliance using said decoded destination identifier without any further action by a user of said appliance; and
passively printed said accepted and selectively processed packets.

18. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 17, wherein said packets are redeemable coupons

19. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 17, wherein said packets are selected from the group consisting of redeemable coupons, messages, appointment reminders, confirmations, tickets, warnings and written packets.

20. (AMENDED) A method for transmitting packets over a pager network to a network of remote printer appliances each having a unique appliance identification number, said method comprising the steps of:

developing a subscriber directory of all subscribers including the appliance number of their printer appliance;

creating a packet to be dispatched to at least one of said recipients;

identifying the potential recipients for the packet;

coding said packet with the appliance identification number of the intended recipients;

transmitting said packet through a pager network to all of said appliances;

passively receiving said packet at all of said appliances without any interaction by users of said printer appliances; and

automatically accepting and selectively processing and passively printing only those packets whose identification numbers match the appliance identification number from all those packets received without any further action by a user of said appliance.

21. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 20, wherein said packets are redeemable coupons.

22. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 20, wherein said packets are selected from the group consisting of redeemable coupons, messages, appointment reminders, confirmations, tickets, warnings and written packets.